



US Army Corps
of Engineers
Baltimore District

The Corps'pondent

a newsletter by the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers for the residents of Spring Valley

January-February 2002

Area-wide soil sampling nearly complete

by Maj. Michael Peloquin
Spring Valley Operations Officer

We continue to make steady progress on a number of activities associated with the investigation and remediation in the Spring Valley neighborhood.

By our revised property and lot count for the project, we've sampled 84 percent of the 1,481 total properties and lots located within the boundary.

For those properties that have not yet been sampled, we will continue to contact property owners in an attempt to obtain a right of entry. In the meantime, we are working with our project partners to bring closure to the area-wide soil sampling for arsenic.

Some resampling required

Of the properties we've screened to date, approximately 144 have been recommended for additional sampling.

This detailed follow-on soil sampling, known as grid sampling, is almost complete with only a few properties to be sampled.

The results from this round of sampling will provide the information used to determine if and where arsenic remediation is needed.

February Meetings

Restoration Advisory Board

Tuesday, Feb. 12,

7 - 9:30 p.m.

Westmoreland

Congregational Church

located at Westmoreland Circle. Meetings are open to the public.

Community meeting

Tuesday, Feb. 19

7 - 9:30 p.m.

Sibley Memorial Hospital Auditorium. All residents are invited to attend.

For certain properties this could involve a very small area, while for others, it could involve the entire property.

The cleanup arsenic level in the soil that would trigger remediation action has not yet been finalized. Senior leaders from each agency involved in the project will meet in early February to finalize the cleanup level to be used. This will be reported at the next community meeting on Feb. 19 at the Sibley Hospital Auditorium.

We have identified seven properties, most of which are in the Fort Gaines area, that have particularly elevated grid-sampling results.

We plan to expedite the cleanup of these properties under a Time Critical Removal Action (TCRA), which allows us to initiate work in a much shorter timeframe than typically possible.

In mid-December we met with a small group of the residents who will be affected by the TCRA work and explained what will happen and addressed their questions.

More meetings are planned with affected property owners, and we will also keep them updated through a biweekly electronic newsletter. We also continue to work with the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry to expedite an exposure investigation of residents living at these properties.

Turtle Park

We've received several phone calls from residents wanting to know the status of the sampling at Friendship (Turtle) Park, located in the AU Park neighborhood. The park was sampled the first week in January, and the preliminary results for all the samples taken are all below 12.6 parts-per-million, which indicates that no further testing or action will be needed. We expect to have validated results by mid to late February.

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Workers install retaining walls in the stream that runs through the Small Disposal Area as part of the restoration of this area.



Fencing marks the areas on the American University campus where soil removal will begin in February.

Area-wide sampling still ongoing *(continued from p. 1)*

Burial pit investigation

We continue to assess the items excavated from the burial pit at 4825 Glenbrook Road. Because of the large number of ordnance items recovered to date, the storage space concerns and increased risk associated with handling and shipping these items, we are looking into alternative ways of dealing with excavated ordnance.

One possibility under consideration is detonating conventional ordnance items on the nearby federal property site.

Since the mid-1990s, an apparatus known as the Donovan Blast Chamber has been safely destroying thousands of ordnance items at both military and civilian sites across the United States.

If deployed to the Spring Valley site, the chamber would expedite the demilitarization process, prevent storage space concerns and reduce the risks of an unplanned ordnance detona-

tion during the handling and shipping of ordnance items.

The chamber would not be used to destroy suspect chemical items. Chemical rounds would continue to be shipped offsite to be evaluated and tested. We have begun discussing the Donovan Chamber alternative with our project partners.

American University

In other activities, restoration of the stream that runs through the Small Disposal Area, which is adjacent to the American University campus, is under way.

The old retaining walls along the stream have been replaced riprap has been placed in the streambed. Once several grids of arsenic-contaminated soil in the area are removed, the stream headwall will be installed, and the site re-graded and seeded with grass.

This month we plan to begin the remediation of contaminated

soil in the remaining Child Development Center grounds (the area outside the playground area). The playground area was remediated last year. Following this, the adjacent intramural fields will be remediated.

For more information on project activities, please visit the Spring Valley website at <http://www.nab.usace.army.mil/projects/WashingtonDC/springvalley.htm>.

We also encourage individuals to visit our public document repository at the Palisades Library, 49th and V Streets, N.W., Washington, D.C.

As validated sampling results become available, they are added to the repository in a binder titled Spring Valley OU5 Arsenic Sampling.

For library hours, please call the library at 202-282-3139. If you have questions about Corps activities in the Spring Valley neighborhood, please call our toll-free information line at 1-800-434-0988.

Restoration Advisory Board Update

At the December RAB meeting, members discussed at length the arsenic remediation goal of 20 parts-per-million that is being proposed by the Environmental Protection Agency and D.C. Department of Health.

A majority of the RAB members supported this goal and felt it is a protective and reasonable level, given the uncertainties associated with the available science and risk assessment process.

The Corps noted that the RAB would be a key participant in the remediation design and approval process for the larger removal action process, which will begin after the TCRA properties are completed. The design process for the non-TCRA properties is scheduled to begin this spring and summer.

At the January RAB meeting, members discussed a list

of concerns about the Spring Valley investigation presented to the RAB by fellow RAB member Geza Teleki.

Where possible, some of these concerns were answered immediately, but others required additional follow-up and will be answered in future meetings and correspondence with the RAB.

On an administrative note, Sarah Stowell Shapley, was re-elected to another six-month term as the RAB's community co-chair.

The RAB also discussed the steps that would be taken to fill the two current vacant seats, which they hope to fill by March.

The two vacancies are the result of the unexpected passing of Paul Wallach, and the resignation of David Rossi, due to health reasons. One additional vacancy exists for an interested laborer or domestic worker, and will be filled once

an interested candidate can be identified.

The Corps believes RAB members and government representatives are working hard to communicate, identify concerns and move the project forward in a collaborative fashion.

While some issues will take time to resolve, all members of the RAB are committed to the process.

The RAB remains a valuable part of the community involvement process and all community members are welcome to attend the meetings and express their interests and concerns to the board.

For more details on the topics and issues discussed at RAB meetings, minutes of each meeting are posted on the website. Click on the **Spring Valley Hot Topics** button at <http://www.nab.usace.army.mil> to access the Spring Valley page.



The portable Donovan Blast Chamber

(Photo courtesy of DeMil International)



Removal of arsenic-contaminated soil continues in Small Disposal Area. *(Photo by Parsons Engineering)*



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